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STATE RESPONSES TO NATURAL RESOURCE CONFLICT IN ADAMAWA STATE

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Introduction

Adamawa State is located in Nigeria's North East zone and has a population of 3.8 million people (National Population Census, 2016). The state was created on the 27th August, 1991, when former Gongola State was split into two states namely Adamawa State and Taraba State. It borders Cameroon to the east, Borno State to the north, Gombe State to the west, and Taraba State to the south. Adamawa State has huge economic potentials in agriculture, especially in livestock and crop farming, which play key role in the development, maintenance and projection of socio-economic strength of a society (Schama,1996). For a long time, the state was considered a melting pot for different ethnic and religious groups as it is home to about 80 ethnic groups and a significant population of her people practice Christianity and Islam and a small number are African Traditional Religion worshipers. Also, on the traditional occupational front, both agriculture and pastoralism have coexisted side-by-side for centuries in the state but these interactions are not devoid of occasional rancor owing to the fact that conflict is a fact of life and societies exist through conflict and consensus. Indeed, it has been established that patterns of conflict and co-operation existed in Adamawa and the contrasting relations between the Fulbe and their Samba and Mambila neighbours (Blench, 2004). Forging cooperation and inter-dependence creates "symbiotic relationships" between "pastoral and settled agricultural systems" based on a certain commonality of interests (World Bank Overseas Evaluation Department, 1994). This is also exemplified in dung and stubble exchanges, known as the contract de furnure in the Francophone Sahel, Fulani graze their cattle on fields that have already been harvested, and the manure of the cattle provides fertilization for the farmer (van den Brink, Bromley and Chavas, 1995).

However, from 2003 onwards, Adamawa State has suffered recurrent bouts of violent conflicts, induced whether by politics, religion, ethnicity or competition for natural resources. As result, the years 2003, 2004, 2007, 2013 to date, have seen extensive violence, generally pitting communities against each other with many lives and property destroyed including massive population displacements. Of recent, natural resource induced conflicts –

particularly, farmer-herder conflict has become recurrent in the state, often assuming ethnic and religious dimensions. Research has shown that many natural resource–based conflicts also involve issues of identity and ideology and thus require examination beyond a hunt for technological solutions (McCandless et al., 2010). As a matter of fact, natural resource conflicts in Adamawa State find expression in multiple identities such as occupation, ethnicity and religion and this has been the defining character of the recurrent farmer-herder conflicts in the state. In Adamawa State, the vast majority of the Fulani are Muslims with a tiny minority being Christians and animists, while the farmers are of many ethnic groups and they are mostly Christians with a tiny being Muslims and traditionalists. A report of the International Crisis Group (ICG, 2018) titled: Africa Report N°262 - Stopping Nigeria's Spiralling Farmer-Herder Violence clearly observes the ethnic and religious dimensions of farmer-herder conflict in the Middle-Belt of Nigeria as follows:

> The conflict between farmers and herders is fundamentally a land-use contest across the country's Middle Belt. It has taken on dangerous religious and ethnic dimensions, however, because most of the herders are from the traditionally nomadic and Muslim Fulani who make up about 90 per cent of Nigeria's pastoralists, while most of the farmers are Christians of various ethnicities. Since the violence escalated in January 2018, an estimated 300,000 people have fled their homes. Large-scale displacement and insecurity in parts of Adamawa, Benue, Nasarawa, Plateau and Taraba States hinder farming as well as herding and drive up food prices. The violence exacts a heavy burden on the military, police and other security services, distracting them from other important missions, such as countering the Boko Haram insurgency (ICG, 2018).

The report also noted that:

> Since September 2017, at least 1,500 people have been killed, over 1,300 of them from January to June 2018, roughly six times the number of civilians killed by Boko Haram over the same period. The first half of 2018 has seen more than 100 incidents of violence and more fatalities than any previous six-month period since the conflict started worsening in 2014. The surge of violence is concentrated in Plateau, Benue and Nasarawa States in the North Central geopolitical zone and in the adjoining Adamawa and Taraba States in the North East zone (ICG, 2018).

In recent times, conflict between farmers and herders, which is a form of natural resource conflict, has become a major source of tension between the two occupational groups in Adamawa State. Evidently, the degree of conflict between different resource users ranges from insignificant to extremely tense, but conflict between pastoralists and farmers far outweighs all other types of resource conflict in frequency and importance (Blench, 2004). A number of factors have been responsible for the dramatic increase in farmer-herder conflict in Adamawa State, chief among them is the increase in cattle rustling, which has forced the Fulani cattle herders who have never carried weapons before to arm themselves in order to be able to protect their cattle which supports their livelihoods. Also, the recurrent conflict between farmers and herders is largely driven by competition for land and water resources. Land conflict remains the most common form of natural resource conflicts in

Adamawa State, accounting for about 2/3 of the reported natural resource conflicts and this is probably because of the volatility of land induced conflict.

Considering the lethal character, the cruelty and the protracted nature of farmer-herder conflict in Adamawa State and in the country at large, the recurrent conflicts can best be described as following: 'natural resource wars', 'new wars' (Kaldor, 2002); 'new barbarism' (Kaplan,1994); 'greed and grievance' (Berdal and Malone, 2000).) and 'low intensity conflict' (Huntington, 1994).

Since the Dumne crisis of 2003 between the Fulani pastoralists and the Yungur farmers, which claimed about 67 lives, until recently, incidences of farmer-herder conflicts in Adamawa State have become pronounced, increasing in scale and intensity. It has ravaged so many local government areas of the state including Maiha, Mubi North and Mubi South, Madagali, Michika, Girei, Dumne, Numan, Demsa, Ganye, Fufore amongst other LGAs. Many lives and property are usually lost, with massive human displacements occurring as a result of violent confrontations between resident farmers and Fulani pastoralists in the state. Since 2017, there have been series of attacks and counter-attacks between the Bachama farmers and the Fulani herders leading to the deaths of many persons from both sides in Numan, Larmude and Girei Local Government Areas in the north eastern zone of Adamawa State. These conflicts have compounded the longstanding tension and mutual suspicion between the two groups.

The recurrent nature of farmer-herder conflicts in the state has often attracted interventions from the federal, state and local governments so as to save lives and property as well as contain the associated violence. Examples of such state responses to farmer-herder conflicts include: the deployment of the federally controlled security agencies especially the police, military, DSS and National Security and Civil Defense Corps, provision of relief materials to displaced persons and other victims of farmer-herder conflicts, payment of compensation to victims of the violent conflicts and establishment of commissions and administrative panels of enquiry among others.

The interventions of the security agencies in farmer-herder conflicts are often reactive and in most cases, security personnel apply excessive force, often leading to gross human rights abuses. Such violations are often greeted with public condemnations, especially from the agriculturalists and pastoralists communities, depending on the side that suffers more destruction. However, it is doubtful if the responses of the Adamawa State Government and federally controlled security agencies have been effective in addressing the root causes of the conflicts. This is because conflicts between these occupational groups have continued unabated, despite the array of measures that are usually deployed to address the scourge, often resulting in further human and material losses. Investigating the reasons behind the protracted nature of farmer-herder conflicts in Adamawa State necessitated the carrying out of this study. The study, therefore, interrogated the responses of the Adamawa State Government to natural resource conflicts, with a special focus on the recurrent farmer-herder conflicts in the state. This is with a view to understanding the nature, trends and patterns, strengths and challenges of Adamawa State Government's responses to farmer-herder conflicts. The outcome of this investigation will assist in developing more workable and sustainable responses that will encourage cooperative management of land and water resources between the two occupational groups.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study is to examine the responses of the federal, Adamawa State Government and local governments to natural resource conflicts, in particular, the recurrent

farmer-herder conflicts in the state. This is with a view to finding out the strengths and weaknesses of the responses and developing a coordinated framework to strengthen the responses towards the sustainable management of natural resource conflicts in the state. The specific objectives of the study are to:

(i) Identify the nature of the responses of the federal, Adamawa state and local governments to natural resource conflicts.

(ii) Understand the trends and patterns of the responses of the federal, Adamawa State Government and local governments to natural resource conflicts in Adamawa state.

(iii) Examine the strengths of the responses of the responses of the federal, Adamawa State Government and local governments to natural resource conflicts in Adamawa state.

(iv) Interrogate the challenges of the responses of the federal, Adamawa State Government and local governments to natural resource conflicts in Adamawa state.

(v) Make specific recommendations on how to strengthen the responses of the federal, Adamawa State Government and local governments to natural resource conflicts in Adamawa state.

Research Questions

The study seeks to provide answers to the following research questions:

(vi) What is the nature of the responses of the federal, Adamawa state and local governments to natural resource conflicts?

(vii) What are the trends and patterns of the responses of the federal, Adamawa State Government and local governments to natural resource conflicts in Adamawa state?

(viii) What are the strengths of the responses of the responses of the federal, Adamawa State Government and local governments to natural resource conflicts in Adamawa state?

(ix) What are the challenges of the responses of the federal, Adamawa State Government and local governments to natural resource conflicts in Adamawa state?

(x) What are the specific recommendations on how to strengthen the responses of the federal, Adamawa State Government and local governments to natural resource conflicts in Adamawa state?

Methodology

The method of the paper is qualitative and exploratory. Data were generated from primary and secondary sources. The primary data was generated through the use of Key Informant Interview (KII) and Focus Group Discussion (FGD). The research was carried out in six local government areas of Adamawa State, which include: Numan, Demsa, Maiha, Mubi South, Mubi North and Madagali. The participants interviewed were drawn from these local government areas and they include: farmers, herders and their leaders, traditional/ community rulers, security personnel, officials of Adamawa State, media practitioners, academia, state parliamentarians, members of the Civil Society, state civil servants in the Ministries of Environment and Agriculture. The KII was complemented with secondary data generated from extant literature. A total of 24 key informant interviews (KIIs) were conducted, 4 KIIs in each of the 6 local government areas of the study and 6 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were also conducted, 1 FGD in each of the 6 local government areas. The secondary data was generated through textbooks, journals, reports submitted by both the farming and pastoral communities, among others.

Drivers of Farmer-Herder Conflicts in Adamawa State

The World Bank defines natural resources as "materials that occur in nature and are essential or useful to humans, such as water, air, land,

forests, fish and wildlife, topsoil, and minerals." These resources are classified as renewable or nonrenewable. Natural resources such as land, water, timber, minerals, metals and oil are vitally important sources of livelihoods, income and influence for countries and communities around the globe. Natural resource conflict arises as a result of disagreements over access to, and control and use of, natural resources. There are many potential parties to natural resource conflict which including farmers, pastoralists, fishermen, hunters, loggers, miners etc. Natural resources, particularly, land and water resources have the potential to unify or divide communities and in recent times have divided many communities across Nigeria with the Middle Belt Region suffering most devastation.

Farmer-herder conflicts in Adamawa State largely occur between sedentary farmers and nomadic Fulani cattle herders but in most cases ripple into communities. The conflict between these two occupational groups are largely driven by many factors such as changes in animal and crop production systems, land tenure regimes, encroachment into the cattle grazing routes, including other factors. In particular, the "cattle corridors" that the Fulani pastoralists used to move their herds around according to environmental conditions have either been swallowed up by the expansion of cultivation or have become too narrow for Fulani herds (Hoffman, 1996). It is also a well-known fact that the land tenure laws of Nigeria are very unfavorable to traditional pastoralists and they hold no legal rights over land, they can merely be granted temporary use permits of certain land (Gefu, 1992). Much of the degradation has been caused by "government interventions in the indigenous livestock sector... based on certain assumptions that date back to the colonial era" (Hoffman, 1996).

Other factors that have changed the local Fulani mode of production are the practice of waged herding and the increase in absentee herd ownership. The migratory nature of the Fulani herders in search of pastures and water also remain a driving force for farmer-herder conflicts in the state, including the availability of small arms in the state, which have also fueled criminality and cattle rustling thereby increasing the longstanding tensions between pastoralists and agriculturalists in the state.

Furthermore, farmer-herder conflicts in Adamawa State are also compounded by environmental and insecurity challenges in the Lake Chad region. This has been acknowledged by a report of the United States Institute for Peace on "Conflict in the Middle Belt" which noted as follows:

> Environmental change in neighboring countries, such as the shrinkage of Lake Chad, has sparked an influx of foreign herders whose lack of familiarity with Nigerian populations often sparks violent misunderstandings. The crisis is also fueled by other conflict in the Lake Chad Basin and Sahel regions that hava forced many nomadic cattle herding populations to flee areas of Mali and Niger where perennial conflict has made it difficult for them to freely graze their cattle (United States Institute of Peace 2017).

Generally, incidences of farmer-herder conflicts in Adamawa State have been aggravated more by factors such as decades-long conflict arising from environmental degradation in the far north, shrinking of Lake Chad, porous borders, widespread availability of guns and other weapons combined with a general breakdown of law and order, crisis of drug abuse among youths, weak justice system, impunity, poor government response to distress calls and the backlash of the new laws banning open grazing in neighbouring Benue and Taraba states. Consequently, there have been several occurrences of clashes between farmers

and herders in Adamawa State which is the focal point of this study. The very first recorded and publicised case of Fulani Herdsmen-Farmers crisis happened at Koh village in Girei local government area of the state on 24th January, 2016 in which 58 innocent people of Koh were killed. The killings were a retaliatory attack on the earlier killing of Fulani residents at Koh. Since then, there have been series of provoked and unprovoked attacks on many other communities resulting in the killing of hundreds of people, destruction of property, rusting of livestock and massive displacement within the state.

Responses of Adamawa State Government to Natural Resource Conflicts (Farmer-Herder Conflicts)

The state is a central actor in the management of conflict and a guarantor of security within its domain. Therefore, the state has a critical role in "engendering or preventing protracted social conflict by depriving or satisfying basic needs" (McCandless and Bangura 2007). This responsibility of the state is encapsulated in the doctrine of social contract theory propounded by Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) and this is also the constitutional responsibility of the federal and state governments of Nigeria which is clearly stated in the Federal Constitution of Nigeria 1999 (as amended), Section 14 (2b) "the security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of government (Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999)". Clearly, security and order can only be achieved by a contract in which all citizens would give up all their individual powers to a central power, the sovereign in return for the protection of life and property (Marshall G 1998). Under the social contract theory, the state is seen as the guarantor of security and the provider of welfare to the citizens (Momodu 2018). The state is therefore constitutionally bound to respond effectively and efficiently to any acts or situation that can undermine its own security as well as that of its citizenry. State responses to violent conflict refers to the actions or the role played by the federal, state or local governments, and their agencies in identifying and responding to conflicts in a sensible, fair and efficient manner that prevents them from escalating out of control and becoming violent. In order to contain specific incidences and/or forestall re-occurrences of farmer-herder conflicts, the Adamawa State Government has had to put up responses. The section below outlines and discusses findings from the KIIs and FGDs conducted in the six selected local government areas of the state based on the types, trends and patterns, strengths and challenges of the responses of the Adamawa State Government

Box 1: Respondents Views on the types of Responses of the Adamawa State Government to Natural Resource Conflicts - Farmer-Herder Conflicts

1. *Farmers and Herdsmen (Prevention and Settlement of Disputes) Edict 1997 (Respondent, Attorney General, academia, media, security agencies, farmers, herders);*
2. *Deployment of the federally controlled security agencies to quell the violence associated with farmer-herder conflicts; (Respondents, farmers and herders);*
3. *Establishment of Administrative Panel of Enquiry to find out the remote and immediate causes of farmer-herder conflicts (Respondents, farmers, herders and officials of state government);*
4. *Provision of relief materials to victims (Respondents, farmers and herders);*
5. *Intervention of the state judiciary – courts (Respondents, traditional rulers, security agencies, state government officials, farmers and herders);*
6. *Fact finding mission by officials of Adamawa State Executive (Respondents, farmers, herders and officials of state government);*
7. *Fact finding mission by the Adamawa State Assembly (Respondents, farmers, herders and officials of state government);*
8. *Proposed Creation of the Adamawa 'State Peace Agency' (Respondent, Attorney General, Adamawa*

State, media, academia, security agencies);

9. *Proposed Creation of 'Adamawa State Special Rights Agency' (to deal with infringements on gender rights and other general rights during communal conflicts (Respondent, Attorney General, academia, media, security agencies, farmers, herders);*
10. *Revised Penal Code which increases the punishment on perpetuators of crimes and violence in communal conflicts (Respondent, Attorney General);*
11. *Payment of compensation by the state government to victims of farmer-herder conflicts (Respondent, state government officials, Farmers and Herders); and Partnership with non-governmental organizations in the peacebuilding efforts (Respondents, Farmers and Herders, state government officials)*

to farmer-herder conflicts in the state.

Generally, the above responses of the Adamawa State Government to farmer-herder conflicts revolve around the interventions of police and military, establishment of commissions and administrative panels of enquiry, courts, and other state government peace initiatives. Research has identified the responses to farmer-herder conflicts at the local level to include: traditional authorities (which exist in hierarchical relations) including pastoral organizations; police, courts and the army, local and state government conflict management efforts (Blench 2004). However, the army has no official role in conflict management at the local level, but some communities and local governments have called them in where civil insecurity has risen to unacceptable levels. Using the army to keep the peace is a last resort. But local governments have been active in forming peace-making committees to resolve farmer-herder conflicts. Below are the commissions and Administrate Panels of Enquiry (APE) established by the Adamawa State Government in responding to farmer-herder conflicts:

1. Commissions and Administrative Panels of Enquiry: The most common response of successive administrations in Adamawa State to natural resource conflicts is the establishment of APE or equivalent bodies to look into the immediate and remote causes of outbreaks of farmer-herder conflicts. Since 2003, such bodies that have been set up include:

· Alhaji Alfa Bellel Administrative panel on Dumne crisis of 2003;

· Koh Administrative Panel of 2017 set up to investigate the riots of 2nd April in Koh, Girei Local Government Area of Adamawa State;

· Kodomon Administrative Panel of Inquiry set up to investigate the Kodomun attack on 4th August, 2016 in which 26 people were killed. As at the end of February, 2018, there was no report from the Panel;

· Establishment of a Commission of Inquiry under the chairmanship of Honourable Justice Adamu Hobon (Rtd) inaugurated on 13th December, 2017;

· Establishing of Numan Administrative Panel in 2018, following the several attacks of the Fulani in Numan;

· Establishment of the Ad-Hoc Committee headed by the Deputy Governor of Adamawa State on managing farmer-herder conflicts in 2018;

· The Federal Government also constituted a National Economic Council (NEC) Presidential Committee on Herdsmen- Farmers Crisis in Nigeria with the Vice President as Chairman. A technical sub-committee of the NEC Committee was inaugurated under the distinguished Chairmanship of the Executive Governor of Ebonyi State, His Excellency Engr. Dave Umahi. The NEC technical sub-committee visited and held a Town Hall Meeting with critical stakeholders in Yola on the 21st February, 2018. The critical stakeholders made very robust and far-reaching presentations and submissions following which a communiqué was issued;

· The state government also established a State Committee on Reconciliation and; Development of Grazing Reserves in Adamawa State with the Deputy Governor as the Chairman. The technical sub-committee held it inaugural and only meeting on 2nd March, 2018. However, the main committee is yet to meet till date. The Presidential NEC Committee produced and submitted its report which was approved by NEC. The high points/decisions were the endorsement of ranching as a panacea to the herdsmen -farmers crisis and the banning of open grazing in the 7 frontline states affected by the crisis.

Arising from the above, research has shown that most, judicial commissions set up to handle conflict issues do not yield any effective action. Both farmers and pastoralists are in dire need to settle these conflicts preferably by the customary institutions rather than the Courts (Blench 2010). The implementation of the recommendations of the above commissions, panels and committees are often hampered by insincerity and lack of political will from the state government as well as biases of other influential political, religious and traditional elites in the state. As a result, the state government has often tactically refused to release the white papers as well as implement their recommendations. This inaction of the government has often eroded the confidence of the people in the government. Hence the people are forced to retreat to their ethnic and religious cleavages and this explains the reason why the incidences of farmer-herder conflicts often assume ethnic and religious dimensions.

In 1997, the Adamawa State Military Government enacted an edict establishing "The Farmers and Herdsmen (Prevention and Settlement of Disputes)". The edict clearly provided that 3 levels of conflict prevention and dispute settlements committees be established at the state, local governments and local community levels. These committees are to handle farmer-herder conflicts at these various levels. Unfortunately, this well-intentioned peace infrastructure has also suffered the same fate like the recommendations of the commissions and administrative panels of enquiry that are yet to be implemented. Evidently, successive administrations in Adamawa State have refused to implement "The Farmers and Herdsmen (Prevention and Settlement of Disputes) till date. The inability of the state government to implement the recommendations of the various commissions and administrative panels of enquiry that nobody forced her to establish, has often excercebated the incidences of farmer-herder conflicts in the state, as both the farming and pastoralists communities often recourse to further violence with very debilitating consequences on both communities. Both the Bachama and Fulani leaders that were interviewed in Numan, Demsa and Girei local government areas of the state, all complained bitterly about the failure of government and the security agencies to arrest and punish the perpetuators of the violence and killings. They blamed this inaction of the state government and security agencies as responsible for the spiraling violent attacks. Traditional Ruler from Numan Local Government Area posited below:

> There government and the security agencies are not doing much. The responses of Adamawa State God would only intervene after people have been killed. The security agencies also intervene after there have been attacks and lives and property have been destroyed. There are supposed to be proactive to forestall attacks. The police and the courts that are institutions of government are also very corrupt to the extent that people do not have confidence and trust in them. These are the problems (Interview with a Traditional ruler from Numan Local

> Government Area of Adamawa State, 11th July, 2018).

The above argument is also affirmed by a report of International Crisis Group which noted the reaction of a pastoralist community to an Investigative Panel set up by Adamawa State after an attack on their community:

> Fulani who were dissatisfied with an investigative panel the Adamawa state government set up after the November 2017 killings of over 55 Fulani in attacks by Bachama youth militias in Numan. They said the panel fell short because it lacked judicial authority. A Fulani youth group, Jonde Jam Fulani Youth Association of Nigeria (JAFU-YAN), vowed reprisals "if the federal government fails to act fast", saying speedy justice for the victims was "the only way to peace". The aggrieved Fulani soon attacked Bachama villages nearby (International Crisis Group 2018).

This submission is also affirmed by many of the respondents interviewed who noted that the state government is yet to release the white papers of the several commissions and APEs that it established. They condemned the secrecy surrounding it and some said that they have lost confidence in the state government.

Arising from the above, it is clear that the trends and patterns of the responses of successive administrations to farmer-herder conflicts in Adamawa State are always similar namely:

Box 2: Respondents Views on the Trends and Patterns of the Responses of Adamawa State Government to Farmer-Herder Conflicts

1. *Respondents were unanimous on the fact that the trends and patterns of the responses of successive administrations to farmer-herder conflicts are similar but with little variations. Such responses include, deployment of security agencies, establishing of administrative panels of enquiry, provision of relief materials, establishing of peace agencies, forging partnerships with civil society bodies (Respondents, farmers, herders, academics and state officials).*

· When violence breaks out between farmers and herders, the state government deploys the police to keep peace in the area. But when the violence escalates such that the police cannot control, then the military will be deployed and, in most cases, they are able to quell the violence due to their professional training;

· Appeal for peaceful co-existence and making of promises for relief and arrest and prosecution of perpetrators;

· Constitute Panels/Commissions of Inquiry which either do not produce any report or when they do after a very long time, the reports are never implemented;

· Government uses its machinery, human and material, to distort, falsify and/or cover up its ineptitude and failure to take pragmatic steps to forestall the crisis;

· No arrest of perpetrators of the violence is usually made and even when they are made, no prosecution is carried out to serve as deterrence. However, in 2016, for the first time, arrest was made of 5 youths from Numan who allegedly killed a Fulani herder in revenge for the killing of 48 persons from Numan area. The 5 have been sentenced to death by hanging;

· This lackadaisical trend and pattern by government only breeds suspicion, distrust and acrimony.

However, there seems to be a departure in some of the responses of the present state government in terms of creating new peace infrastructures such as the establishment of 'Adamawa State Agency for Peace, Rehabilitation and Reconciliation' (APRR). Also, established is 'Adamawa State Special Rights Agency' to deal with infringements on gender rights and other general human rights abuses during communal conflicts as well as partnering with mostly international humanitarian and peace organizations with the aim of preventing and managing all forms of violent conflict including farmer-herder conflicts. These efforts are meant to strengthen the peace capacity of the state.

Box 3: Respondents Views on the Strengths of the Responses of the Adamawa State Government to Farmer-Herder Conflicts

2. *Deployment of security agencies has been helping to reduce the violence and its associated loss of life and property (Respondents, farmers and herders, academics, state officials, security agencies);*
3. *Provision of relief materials to victims of farmer-herder conflicts (Respondents, farmers and herders);*
4. *Compensation of victims (Respondents, farmers and herders, academics, state officials, security agencies);*
5. *Strong and appropriate Commissions/Panels are usually constituted but unfortunately they are not made or allowed or motivated to function and work to produce results (Respondents, farmers and herders, academics, state officials, security agencies);*

Arising from the above submissions, studies have indicated the important benefits of the deployment of law enforcement agencies to theatres of violent conflicts in Nigeria (Akinwale 2009). Specifically, it has been abundantly argued that "humanitarian military intervention has, in fact, done some good in the past by saving innocent lives. It has saved lives in a wide variety of circumstances, using a range of strategies and techniques" (Taylor 2008). With regards to the farmer-herder conflicts, it has also been observed that the vigorous deployment of police and military interventions in Adamawa state stopped further major attacks, but killings continue on a smaller scale (ICG 2018).

Respondents from Numan, Demsa and Girei local government areas of Adamawa state echoed the role of the security agencies, especially the military in the stoppage of violence associated with farmer-herder conflicts and its spread to other communities. They also observed that the intervention of the military has led to relative peace in their areas. However, they affirmed that killings are still going on in the remote villages where there is no presence of security personnel.

There is a very important point that needs to be stressed at this juncture, that is, all governments, whether federal, state or local, place very high premium on the safety and security of their citizens and are therefore always well intentioned to the extent that they commit huge resources in order to ensure the safety and security of their citizens. The validity of this argument cannot be disputed, in fact, the argument debunks the popular believe among Nigerians, who often think that government normally abdicate its responsibility in terms of protecting her citizens, regardless of which ethnic group or religion or economic status that they belong to. This is why Willy Brandt recently declared that:

> The vast majority of those who carry responsibility for their people and nations ... are full of goodwill and... intend to solve the problems and let our world reach a state of security and well being. A state in which according to the capabilities of all its members mankind could overcome oppressive

misery and develop its immense resources.

Box 4: Respondents Views on the Challenges of Responses of Adamawa State Government to Farmer-Herder Conflicts

1. *Both the Federal and State Governments lack the political will to address the root causes of farmer-herder conflicts (Respondents, Farmers, Herders and officials of State Government);*
2. *Weakness of administration of justice due to corruption in the system (Respondents, farmers, herders and officials of State Government);*
3. *Wrong perception of the responses of the state by both the farming and herding communities (Academics, Media and officials of state government);*
4. *Politicization of state responses (Respondents, farmers, herders, academics and media);*
5. *Delay in the responses of the state government and its agencies (Respondents, farmers, herders, Academics and Media);*
6. *Insufficient funding to the state agencies saddled with the responsibilities to intervene in farmer-herder conflict (Respondents, farmers, herders, academics and media);*
7. *Over-centralisation of the security architecture, which means that the state government can only appeal to the federal (Respondents, farmers, herders, academics and media); government (Respondents, farmers, herders, security agencies, academics and media);*
8. *Poor definition of farmer-herder conflict as it is often ethnicised and religionised which makes it difficult to understand (Respondents, farmers, herders, security agencies, academics and media);*
9. *Slow and reactive response of law enforcement agencies (Respondents, Farmers, Herders, Academics and Media);*
10. *Weakness and corruption among state institutions who often sabotage efforts at managing farmer-herder conflict (Respondents, Farmers, Herders, Academics and Media);*
11. *Inability of the state government to facilitate dialogue between farmers and herders (Respondents, farmers, herders, academics and media);*
12. *Insincerity on the part of government and other stakeholders portraying their biases (Respondents, farmers, herders, academics and media);*

The above submissions can be summed up as lack of political will on the part of both federal and state governments in addressing the root causes of farmer-herder conflicts and the gross inefficiency of their conflict management agencies. This has been a major challenge towards ending the recurrent surge of farmer-herder conflicts in Adamawa State. This challenge has also been re-echoed by a coalition of over 70 Civil Society Organisations, which issued a statement lamenting that the "Nigerian nation appears to be descending into chaos" and the security agencies. In the same vein, a report of the United States Institute for Peace on “Nigeria: Conflict in the Middle Belt” indicates that 'recent episodes of farmer-herder conflicts in Nigeria continue to suggest that efforts by the federal government to address the conflict are inadequate (Nigeria Civil Society Situation Room. Concerns on the state of the nation! issued in Abuja: Wednesday, 24th January 2018. situationroom.placng.org). There is no gainsaying the fact that the responses of the Adamawa State Government to farmer-herder conflicts are largely ineffective and needs to be thoroughly re-examined for the purpose of strengthening them for better results. The state is even powerless because it does not have significant control over the police, military and the other security agencies, which are centrally controlled by the federal government. A prominent traditional ruler from Adamawa State affirmed this when he lamented about the fact that all the security agencies are federally controlled and that the state government has limited control over them. This he said has been hampering the efficiency of the state in preventing outbreaks of violent conflicts. As a matter of fact, it has been revealed that “while some early warning systems supported by the state government and civil society organizations exist, the capacity of justice and security actors to effectively utilize these systems to address early warning signs and respond to violent conflict is limited (United States Institute of Peace 2017), Nigeria:

Conflict in the Middle Belt. Testimony before the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission).

In particular, most of the respondents from Numan to Demsa and from Girei to Mubi and Maiha to Madagali; all alluded to the lack of political will on the part of the federal and state governments to decisively deal with the issues in farmer-herder conflicts in Adamawa State as well as the incapacity of security agencies. For instance, "farmers do get the police involved when the traditional authorities fail them. The result is usually unsatisfactory, with farmers often reporting they have to make payments themselves to ensure the police take action and often subsequently receiving no compensation for damage to their farms" (Blench 2004). The courts are of little use; people report cases being stuck there for many years (ibid). In order to proactively address the challenges associated with the incapacity of government to efficiently deal with the protracted incidence of farmer-herder conflicts in Adamawa State and Nigeria as a whole, USIP has suggested the following:

> Strengthening coordination between local communities and state justice and security actors, including the police and judiciary, which can help state governments prioritize preventive measures. This co-ordination can be used to establish new or strengthen existing local peacebuilding and reconciliation mechanisms, especially within rural communities in areas most affected by this conflict. These efforts should also be complemented by support to state justice and security actors to strengthen their capacity to prevent, respond, and prosecute violent conflict.

There seems to be a growing loss of confidence in the security agencies because of their inability to respond promptly in preventing outbreaks of violent conflicts in the state as well as the highhandedness of some of their personnel, who often commit human rights abuses. The consequence of this inefficiency is that most of the farming communities are now forced to forming their own armed militia groups. This has often escalated the conflicts between the farming and herding communities, with severe humanitarian consequences. In addition to the official role of the state, the state can also leverage on the traditional institutions who command a lot of respect from their subjects particularly in the northern region of Nigeria. Studies have sufficiently supported the claim that traditional authorities had been (and in some cases, may still be) capable of coordinating access to pasture and water resources, and that a well-defined membership obeyed rules and regulations over use of these resources (van den Brink et al., 1995). Strengthening the traditional institutions is very critical towards preventing and management of conflicts in local communities because the local communities are currently functioning under a situation of constraint, where traditional leaders clearly require more than delegation of responsibilities, as is currently the case; to ensure their buy-in, the devolution of rights, assets, and power is a must (Nagendra 2005).

Opportunity for the resolution of farmer-herder conflicts in Adamawa State

One very interesting discovery that was made from the survey carried out in the course of this study was that both the farming and pastoralist communities interacted with from Numan, Demsa and Griei; all craved for the state government to call them to have a round table dialogue, which they say that is long over-due. These three local government areas are the most active flashpoints of farmer-herder conflicts in Adamawa State. Expressing this view, a Fulani community leader from Numan local government area of the state stated as follows:

> We the Fulani are not happy about the present acrimonious and conflictive relationship between us and our host community, the Bachama, whom we have lived together for many years in peace. We have shared together for long but now the relationship between us has turned sour. This is why we want the government to call both sides together and let us discuss and find lasting solution to the problem between us which we believe we can resolve. We beg the government to do this. Anytime we are called upon, we will avail ourselves the opportunity to participate (Interview with a pastoralist leader from the Numan Local Government Area, 11th July, 2018).

Similar views were also expressed by two District Heads, one each from Numan and larmude, including farmers and pastoralists from Demsa and Girei local government areas, who sincerely clamored for the state government to create the opportunity for a round table dialogue to trash the underlining issues in the conflict between the farming and pastoralist communities in Adamawa State. This outcry to the state government is a clear admission of the fact that both groups are battle weary and therefore, determined to settle their problem. This signifies a condition of a 'mutually hurting stalemate' (Zartman 1985). which actually creates an opportunity for the parties to settle their problem. The situation of the farming and pastoralist communities is also a ripe moment in the conflict, which means that "the parties' motivation to settle the conflict is at its highest" (Zartman 2000), which is normally characterized with "circumstances conducive for negotiated progress or even solution (Haass 1990)." The willingness of both the pastoralist and farming communities to dialogue together finds expression in what scholars that promotes 'conflict ripeness theory' believe in, that "disputes cannot end until certain stages of conflict development have been passed through (Regan et al., 2000)." In essence, "when the parties find themselves locked in a conflict from which they cannot escalate to [unilateral] victory and this deadlock is painful to both of them (although not necessarily in equal degrees or for the same reasons), they seek a way out (Zartman 2000)." The willingness of the farming and pastoralist communities in Adamawa State presents an opportunity for the state government and non-governmental organizations both international and local that might be interested in brokering or supporting peace initiatives between the two communities with a view to ending the recurrent confrontations between the groups in Adamawa State.

Conclusion

Unarguably, the recurrent farmer-herder conflicts have become a serious security threat to peace and security thereby reversing the prospects for development in the country and Adamawa State which is the focal point of this study. The recurrent conflicts are fast spreading across the state and exerting an ever-deadlier toll on lives, property and massive displacements of people within the state. The overstretched federally controlled security agencies have not been able to forestall the revengeful attacks of the rampaging killer herdsmen and the attacks of the resident agriculturalists. The responses of the Adamawa State Government have also not been able to end the continued attacks and counter attacks from the agriculturalists and pastoralists communities. These apparent weaknesses of the responses of Adamawa State Government have continued to encourage more deadly attacks from both sides of the warring parties, with deadly criminality and banditry perpetuated by unscrupulous elements among the attackers. As British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw observed in the light of similar attacks elsewhere, "When we allow governments to fail, warlords, drug barons, or terrorists fill the

vacuum….Terrorists are strongest where states are weakest." The Adamawa State Government must, therefore, recalibrate its strategies towards preventing further outbreaks of farmer-herder violence in the state as well as address the structural causes of the protracted conflicts. It must also encourage cooperative relationship between pastoralist and agri-culturalist communities in the state. With the absence of a well-coordinated federal and state response to the scourge of farmer-herder conflicts in Adamawa State, there is the need for the state to leverage on the existing local mechanisms of conflict resolution so as to promptly and efficiently forestall conflicts between the two groups.

Policy Recommendations

The study makes the following key policy recommendations that need to be integrated into the responses of the Adamawa State Government in order to strengthen responses to farmer-herder conflicts and natural resource conflicts in general:

1. There is the need for an integrated state response that will ensure a sustainable management of the recurrent conflicts between farmers and herdsmen in Adamawa State. This should involve the deployment of the instrumentality of strategic policy making, legislation and judicial measures towards strengthening the governance of natural resources in the state. This will go a long way towards regulating competition for natural resources which is the major driver of natural resource conflicts in Adamawa State.

2. Adamawa State Government responses should be calibrated towards encouraging cooperative use and management of natural resources between and among stakeholders in the state.

3. It is also very imperative that the Adamawa State government should encourage regular dialogues between herders and farmers by strengthening mechanisms that already exists at the state and local levels, and particularly by supporting peace initiatives at the local level.

4. Adamawa State Government also needs to create employment opportunities for its teaming youths in areas of animal husbandry and crop farming, which have enormous economic potentials. This will help to keep youth away from engaging in violent conflict.

5. The state government should demonstrate the necessary political will to implement all White Papers, reports and recommendations of previous and present committees and commissions established to investigate the recurrent clashes between farmers and herders. This will go a long way in bringing lasting solution to the protracted conflicts.

6. Incidences of farmer-herder conflicts have been increasing in the state due to the decreasing efficiency of the traditional conflict management mechanisms. To address this, Adamawa State Government should strengthen the capacity of the traditional institutions through regular capacity building in conflict management, legal empowerment and provision of financial support.

7. The state should also ensure the inclusion and active participation of women, youths and persons with disability in all peace processes.

8. Sedenterization/settlement of nomadic and transhuman pastoralists using existing Grazing Reserves should be the technical way to go. Technocrats should be engaged to drive the process.

9. Competition for land and water resources is at the heart of the recurrent conflicts between herders and farmers in the state. Therefore, Adamawa State Government should promote and sensitise farmers and herders to adopt and deploy efficient and sustainable modern livestock production technologies, husbandry

and crop farming practices and strategies. This will help in dismantling some traditional and archaic practices which encourage unhealthy competition and confrontations between the groups.

10. The state government should also strengthen its punishment regime by ensuring that it brings the perpetrators of past violence to justice and enforcing grazing laws. It must also advance and protect human rights, administrative justice and integrity in private and public life.

11. A core element of Africa's security sector mechanisms is the emergence of partnerships between state and non-state actors in security provisioning which has been proving efficient in tackling security challenges especially in localized areas where the presence of government is not strong. Adamawa State Government should leverage on the existing non-state security structure by engaging them to police the cattle routes and protect the farmlands and forest areas.

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